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Forensic Science International: Mind and Law

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Opening Editorial

Forensic Science International Mind and Law: Combining international scientific exchange and local applicability



When a new journal is founded, which is intended to be a platform for the exchange of ideas between psychiatrists, psychologists, lawyers, and other disciplines, one must immediately ask whether the readership, which is visibly flooded with new publications, can really benefit from such an undertaking (Ware & Mabe, 2015). Perhaps the testing of other channels from the field of social media would be more suitable to promote the necessary exchange between stakeholders? Maybe micro-blogging would be enough (Trueger, 2018)? Over the coming years, *Forensic Science International: Mind and Law* may also open up to such approaches and allow experiments. Indeed, our authors are already encouraged to submit unconventional proposals to the editorial staff.

Nevertheless, we believe that we are already pursuing some innovative initiatives with *FSI: Mind and Law* that offer real added value for a forensic psychiatric, psychological, and legal readership and authorship. First, *FSIML* operates under a complete open access model, which will help authors from different parts of the world with staggered (and reduced) Article Publishing Charges (APC) (Wise, 2011). Furthermore, we intend to strengthen the regional significance of the scientific discussion in the international arena. We would therefore like to make it possible for authors of *FSIML* who do not speak English to publish their own work in their respective native language as supplemental material. Together with the introduction of a “laymans summary” this step should enable authors to communicate their scientific results effectively to legal and political decision makers. Further, we aim to have *FSIML* indexed in various smaller, niche databases and indexing systems in the future, to aid the accessibility and demographic reach of scientific findings beyond traditional audiences (Canela et al., 2019). Unlike other journals, we have therefore decided to allow formats for article types that are less familiar to a purely medical readership, but more familiar to a legal readership. We will also offer a platform that encourages authors to describe forensic psychiatric care systems in different regions and, in doing so, to choose different forms of presentation from those customary in the anglophone linguistic area.

As a forensic psychiatrist, one is arguably more aware than other medical disciplines that the social relevance of one's own scientific activity cannot be determined by journal metrics. The journal therefore feels closely connected to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) (DORA, 2013), which advocates the capabilities of open access journals, by relaxing unnecessary limits on the number of words, figures, and references in articles, and exploring new indicators of significance and impact. In alignment with DORA, *FSIML* will try to refrain from using the Impact Factor as a promotional tool in the future

and help to develop other forms of evaluation. If, for instance, an article that was published in *FSIML* received local relevance, e.g. in case law or in a court decision, we will comment on this and emphasize this.

A look at the cover of *FSIML* and the composition of the Editorial Board makes it clear that we as editors are aware that forensic psychiatry, psychology, and related disciplines always carry a very special ethical responsibility (Niveau & Welle, 2018). For this reason, *FSIML* will consistently address the distinctive implications of the assessment, treatment, and accommodation of people with mental disorders with regard to Human Rights Law and offer a hand to the scientific discourse here.

As editors, we look forward to scientifically sound manuscripts and hope to create a platform with *FSIML* that stimulates and inspires ideas at the border between law and medicine.

Declaration of competing interest

The author is the Editor-in-Chief of Forensic Science International: Mind and Law.

Appendix A. German Language Version

A German Language version of this article can be found online at <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsimpl.2019.100001>.

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Michael Liebrezn

E-mail address: Michael.Liebrezn@fpd.unibe.ch.<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsimpl.2019.100001>2666-3538/© 2019 Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).